

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An image formation system comprising:

an image formation apparatus connected to a network, said image formation apparatus having one or more hardware resources of a display section, an operation panel section, a printing section, and an image pickup section, wherein said image formation apparatus is capable of providing one or more services of a printer, a copier, or a facsimile; and

a server connected to the network, said server providing a software component to said image formation apparatus via said network,

wherein said image formation apparatus includes:

a selection unit that selects a desired software component from a list of software components accumulated in said server and displayed on said display section;

an acquisition unit that acquires the software component selected by said selection unit and authentication information from said server; and

a control unit that controls processing operation of the software component acquired by said acquisition unit based on the authentication information acquired by said acquisition unit, wherein

said control unit restricts the hardware resources available in said image formation apparatus for the acquired software component based on the authentication information.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The image formation system according to claim [[2]]
1, wherein

when authentication based on the authentication information has failed, said control unit specifies minimum resources so that said display section and operation panel section of the resources become available for the software components, and when the authentication based on the authentication information has succeeded, said control unit specifies that all the resources are available for the software components.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The image formation system according to claim 3, wherein the authentication information includes information related to rights for using the respective resources by the software components, and said control unit decides whether the software components can use the resources based on the information related to using rights.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The image formation system according to claim 1, wherein said image formation apparatus further comprises:

a transmission unit that transmits configuration information for said image formation apparatus to said server when succeeding in authentication based on the authentication information, and

said server organizes software components executable on said image formation apparatus based on the configuration information received from said image formation apparatus, and sends the organized software components back to said image formation apparatus.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The image formation system according to claim 5, wherein

said transmission unit transmits identification information for identifying said image formation apparatus to said server, and

said server identifies one or more of configuration information and a contract form of said image formation apparatus based on the identification information received from said image formation apparatus, organizes software components executable on said image formation apparatus based on the identified configuration information or contract form, and sends the organized software components back to said image formation apparatus.

Claim 7 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 1, wherein said server is a WWW server functioning on the Internet, and

said image formation apparatus further provides a browser with which pages described in HTML are browsed.

Claim 8 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 7, wherein the software component acquired by said acquisition unit operates as a plug-in for said browser.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The image formation system according to claim 7, wherein said image formation apparatus further establishes a virtual machine that can execute CPU-independent intermediate code, and the virtual machine executes the software components accumulated in said server in a form of intermediate code.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The image formation system according to claim 1, wherein, one vendor manages said server, and another vendor can register a software component to said server by paying a particular registration fee to the vendor that manages the server.

Claim 11 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 10, wherein the vendor is charged for an advertisement fee of a software component each time said image formation apparatus acquires the software component from said server.

Claim 12 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 11, wherein a server of the third-party vendor can be registered with said image formation apparatus as a server allowed to be authenticated when the third-party pays a particular registration fee.

Claim 13 (Original): The image formation system according to claim 12, wherein one or more of a charge for using said image formation apparatus and the registration fee paid by the third-party vendor is changed according to a range of resources available for said image formation apparatus.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A software acquisition method comprising:
connecting an image formation apparatus and a server to a network, said image formation apparatus having one or more hardware resources of a display section, an operation panel section, a printing section, and an image pickup section;
providing one or more of services of a printer, a copier, or a facsimile;
providing a software component to said image formation apparatus from said server,
wherein said image formation apparatus performs steps of:
selecting a desired software component from a list of software components accumulated in said server and displayed on said display section;
acquiring the selected software component and authentication information from said server; and

controlling a processing operation of the acquired software component based on the acquired authentication information, wherein
the controlling step restricts the hardware resources available in said image formation apparatus for the acquired software component based on the authentication information.

Claim 15 (Canceled).

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The software acquisition method according to claim [[15]] 14, wherein,

when authentication based on the authentication information has failed, the controlling step specifies minimum resources so that said display section and operation panel section of the resources become available for the software components, and when authentication based on the authentication information has succeeded, said controlling step specifies that all the resources are available for the software components.

Claim 17 (Original): The software acquisition method according to claim 16, wherein the authentication information includes information related to rights for using the respective resources by the software components, and
the controlling step decides whether the software components can use the resources based on the information related to the using rights.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The software acquisition method according claim 14, further comprising:

transmitting configuration information for said image formation apparatus to said

server when said image formation apparatus has succeeded in authentication based on the authentication information, wherein

said server organizes software components executable on said image formation apparatus based on the configuration information received from said image formation apparatus, and sends the organized software components back to said image formation apparatus.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The software acquisition method according to claim 18, wherein

in the transmitting step, identification information for identifying said image formation apparatus is transmitted to said server, and

said server identifies one or more of configuration information and a contract form of said image formation apparatus based on the identification information received from said image formation apparatus, organizes software components executable on said image formation apparatus based on the identified configuration information and/or contract form, and sends the organized software components back to said image formation apparatus.

Claim 20 (Original): The software acquisition method according to claim 14, wherein said server is a WWW server functioning on the Internet, and

said image formation apparatus has a browser with which pages described in HTML are browsed.

Claim 21 (Original): The software acquisition method according to claim 20, wherein the software component acquired in the acquiring step operates as a plug-in for said browser.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The software acquisition method according to claim 20, wherein said image formation apparatus has a virtual machine that can execute CPU-independent intermediate code, and the virtual machine executes the software components accumulated in said server in a form of intermediate code.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The software acquisition method according to claim 14, wherein, one vendor manages said server, and another vendor can register a software component to said server by paying a particular registration fee to the vendor that manages the server.

Claim 24 (Original): The software acquisition method according to claim 23, wherein the vendor is charged for an advertisement fee of a software component each time said image formation apparatus acquires the software component from said server.

Claim 25 (Original): The software acquisition method according to claim 24, wherein a server of the third-party vendor can be registered with said image formation apparatus as a server allowed to be authenticated when the third-party pays a particular registration fee.

Claim 26 (Original): The software acquisition method according to claim 25, wherein one or more of a charge for using said image formation apparatus and the registration fee paid by the third-party vendor is changed according to a range of resources available for said image formation apparatus.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): A computer readable recording medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to realize a software

acquisition method in an image formation system which connects an image formation apparatus and a server to a network, said image formation apparatus having one or more hardware resources of a display section, an operation panel section, a printing section, and an image pickup section and for providing one or more of services of a printer, a copier, or a facsimile, and said server providing a software component to said image formation apparatus, wherein said image formation apparatus performs steps of:

selecting a desired software component from a list of software components accumulated in said server and displayed on said display section;

acquiring the selected software component and authentication information from said server; and

controlling a processing operation of the acquired software component based on the acquired authentication information, wherein

the controlling step restricts the hardware resources available in said image formation apparatus for the acquired software component based on the authentication information.

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): A computer program embodied in a computer readable medium for causing a computer to realize a software acquisition method in an image formation system which connects an image formation apparatus and a server to a network, said image formation apparatus having one or more hardware resources of a display section, an operation panel section, a printing section, and an image pickup section and for providing one or more of services of a printer, a copier, or a facsimile, and said server providing a software component to said image formation apparatus, wherein said image formation apparatus performs steps of:

selecting a desired software component from a list of software components accumulated in said server and displayed on said display section;

acquiring the selected software component and authentication information from said server; and

controlling a processing operation of the acquired software component based on the acquired authentication information, wherein

the controlling step restricts the hardware resources available in said image formation apparatus for the acquired software component based on the authentication information.